

# ANIMAL WELFARE MATTERS

to animals, people and the environment

The case for a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare



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World Society for the Protection of Animals

# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON ANIMAL WELFARE

## Animal Welfare Matters to animals, people and the environment

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#### SUMMARY

How animals are treated matters to animals and to people. Animal welfare concerns both the physical and mental well-being of animals and is therefore particularly important for sentient animals – those that can have feelings, including suffering. There is scientific evidence for sentience in all vertebrates and some invertebrates.

A Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW) will produce benefits for animals, people and the environment alike – benefits that are important for the members of the United Nations and the UN Millennium Development Goals. These will include benefits to:

**Human health** – because good animal care reduces the risk of diseases transmissible to humans (zoonoses) and of food poisoning. The human-animal bond also has therapeutic effects

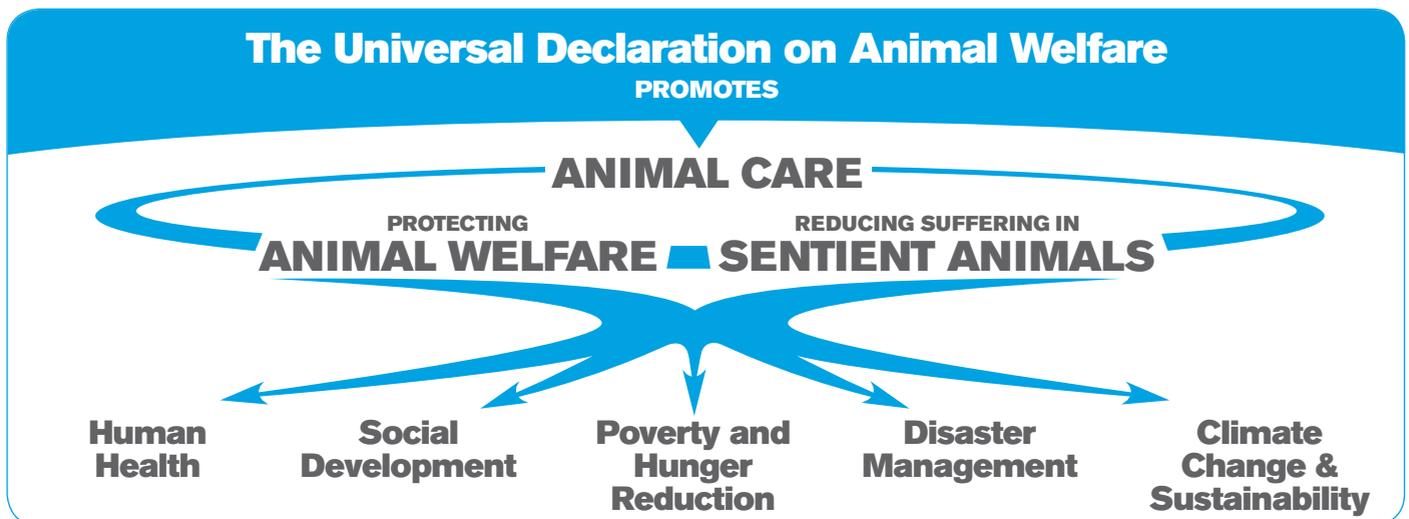
**Social development** – because people's attitudes and behaviour towards animals overlap with their attitudes and behaviour towards each other

**Poverty and hunger reduction** – because looking after animals properly improves their productivity and helps farmers to provide food for themselves, their families and the community

**Disaster management** – because animals are important for people's lives and livelihoods and must be considered in disaster preparedness and response

**Environmental sustainability** – because responsible animal management affects land use, climate change, pollution, water supplies, habitat conservation and biodiversity for the better.

**Animals matter to the world. It is time for a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare.**



# Animal Welfare Matters to animals, people and the environment

## The case for a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare

“ Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things,  
man will not himself find peace. ”

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

### Introduction

How animals are treated matters both to the animals and to people. This is part of a broader understanding of the interdependence of all living things. Yet there is no formal, global recognition of the importance of animal welfare. It is time to correct this. A Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare will encourage governments and intergovernmental agencies worldwide to take actions that will produce benefits for animals, people and the environment alike – benefits that are important for the members of the United Nations and the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Animals play many vital roles in the lives of people all over the world. Nearly half the world's population is involved in agriculture and livestock are important for food, for labour and for income. Millions of people keep animals as companions and enjoy the existence of wildlife; these can help their physical and psychological health<sup>66</sup>. Throughout our history and throughout the world, humans have had a close relationship with the living world and many feel a natural affinity to other animals. Even people in cities who rarely see animals benefit from animal products and from biological diversity. In most countries there are cultural traditions on humane treatment of animals, including in religious teachings. Animals matter to people.

## THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON ANIMAL WELFARE

An agreement among people and nations to recognise that animals are sentient and can suffer, to respect their welfare needs, and to end animal cruelty – for good.

[www.udaw.org](http://www.udaw.org)



# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON ANIMAL WELFARE

## Animal welfare

Animal welfare concerns the physical and mental well-being of animals and involves considerations of how animals evolved and their natural environments<sup>20</sup>. It is a description of the state of animals and the effect on them of care or mistreatment.

The importance of animal welfare is well established. It is emphasised in many ancient religious texts. It is agreed by many moral philosophers<sup>64, 69, 72</sup>, political scientists<sup>29</sup>, legal experts<sup>82</sup> and economists<sup>45</sup>. Science is making major contributions to our understanding of animal welfare<sup>20, 78</sup> and welfare science is a serious academic subject, included in veterinary curricula and other courses and the subject of several scientific journals. There are established positions in universities, governments and industries related to the field.

The need to care for animals seems on examination to be almost self-evident, given the extent to which people depend on animals for food, for livelihood and for cultural and psychological reasons, as well as the moral duty of humans to protect the animals in our care. Much of this can be expressed by the principle, “Look after your animals and they will look after you”<sup>67</sup>. However, people do not always recognise or plan for such opportunities. They may also be unable to care for animals in times of crisis, when time and resources are limited and there are other priorities for action. So mistreatment of animals is sometimes deliberate, sometimes a matter of neglect because of other priorities, sometimes caused by lack of information and sometimes because of lack of resources or preparedness<sup>3</sup>.

Giving active consideration to animal welfare involves understanding the needs of individual animals, promoting care and reducing mistreatment. This does not mean that any person or any country is giving animals rights or elevating the status of animals above humans. Rather, it means that we ask questions – increasingly important to millions of people around the world<sup>22, 57</sup> – about how our actions affect animals and how we can reduce animal suffering. The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) says that “The use of animals carries with it an ethical responsibility to ensure the welfare of such animals to the greatest extent practicable”<sup>54</sup>.

## Animal sentience

Sentience is the capacity to have feelings, including pain, distress, suffering and pleasure. While discussions of sentience sometimes include other issues such as complex cognition and self-consciousness, those issues are not the most relevant to identifying which animals are most affected by care or mistreatment. As the moral philosopher Jeremy Bentham<sup>11</sup> said of animals in 1789, “The question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?” Defining sentience as the capacity to suffer and have other feelings is increasingly the approach adopted by philosophers<sup>72</sup>, scientists<sup>19</sup> and governments<sup>10</sup>.

Types of suffering include hunger, thirst, discomfort, pain, frustration, fear and distress, as outlined in the Five Freedoms<sup>24</sup>. Most scientific information is available on hunger, thirst and pain, and this shows that all vertebrates and some invertebrates are similar to humans and other mammals in their responses to food or water shortages and to unpleasant stimuli. They have similar nerve receptors and processing functions within the central nervous system and show similar physiological and behavioral changes<sup>28, 40</sup>. This is strong evidence that these animals

“ A good deed done to an animal is as meritorious as a good deed done to a human being, while an act of cruelty to an animal is a bad as an act of cruelty to a human being. ”

ASCIBED TO THE PROPHET MOHAMMED



are sentient and that their mental processes are comparable in at least some ways to those of humans and other mammals.

Among invertebrates, the best evidence for sentience is in cephalopods (octopuses and related species). They have the largest brains of all invertebrates, with complex organization analogous to the cerebral cortex of vertebrates and processing that suggests they can experience pain<sup>73</sup>. This evidence is being taken seriously by governments. For example, the UK government altered the regulations for laboratory experiments causing animals pain, suffering or distress, to protect octopuses as well as vertebrates<sup>77</sup>.

This is an active research area and knowledge of the sentience of different species continues to grow<sup>1</sup>.

**“ I’m very supportive of international organisations seeking to raise standards for everyone to basic levels of humanity, decency and justice. Just as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights raises the standard by which we can judge our treatment of people, so too support for a Declaration on Animal Welfare emphasises our status as a good international citizen. ”**

**NEW ZEALAND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE JIM ANDERTON  
2006**

## **Animal sentience matters**

Understanding that animals are sentient, that they can suffer, leads to responsibilities in how they should be treated. For example, it is common farming practice to restrict the feed of sows to stop them getting too fat. It used to be thought that they would get used to this restriction. However, researchers in Edinburgh trained pigs fed on standard rations to push a panel, operating a machine that delivered extra feed. They pushed the panel hundreds of times in a short test, at any time of day<sup>41</sup>. This is strong scientific evidence that sows suffer chronically from intense hunger throughout their 16 week pregnancy. Worse, they were usually confined in individual gestation crates so small they could not even turn round, frustrating foraging behaviour and causing severe stress. These conclusions were widely accepted and led to gestation crates for sows being phased out in the UK, because it was agreed that preventing such hungry animals from foraging was unacceptable<sup>6</sup>. Gestation crates are now also being phased out in the rest of the European Union and in other countries, and group housing successfully reintroduced.

Caring for animals, and reducing suffering in those that are sentient, produces benefits not just for the animals but also for people and the environment. These benefits will be outlined in the next five sections.



# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON ANIMAL WELFARE

## HUMAN HEALTH AND ANIMAL WELFARE

There are many ways in which mistreatment or neglect of animals causes problems for human health. Conversely, care of animals can reduce risks and increase benefits to humans. The most urgent problem is diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans (zoonoses). Some such diseases are long-standing, like rabies, which affects wildlife, dogs and humans (Case study 1). Others are more recent, such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, also known as mad cow disease<sup>4</sup>. Yet other diseases are recurrent and one of these is vastly more dangerous worldwide than any other for both animals and people: avian influenza (Case study 2). In each of these cases, better protection and treatment of animals reduces the risk of disease both to them – improving animal welfare – and to humans.

### CASE STUDY 1

#### Rabies in India

Rabies kills over 55,000 people every year<sup>84</sup>, who are mainly infected by dog bites. Yet many attempts to control dogs are both inhumane and ineffective, for example by shooting<sup>81</sup>. Since 1996, the NGO Help in Suffering has been working in the city of Jaipur, India, where dogs have long been accepted as part of the community. Over 50% of dogs in an area 8km by 14km have been captured humanely, sterilised, vaccinated against rabies and released<sup>82</sup>. Not only the dogs benefit: cases of human rabies in the area reported to hospitals fell from ten in 1993 to none in 2001 and 2002, while those outside the area continued to increase<sup>83</sup>. Consideration of the needs of animals led to a positive outcome for both the animals and people involved.



### CASE STUDY 2

#### Avian influenza

Avian influenza is endemic in wild birds, but over the last ten years outbreaks in poultry have increased dramatically, leading to the culling of over 250 million birds worldwide<sup>27</sup>. These outbreaks have included highly pathogenic strains<sup>51</sup> and have also infected humans, killing 200<sup>85</sup>. It is expected that the virus will sooner or later evolve the ability to spread from human to human, causing a pandemic that could kill 1.5 billion people<sup>50</sup>. Mutations in the virus have been fostered by intensive broiler production<sup>30</sup>. Keeping thousands of genetically uniform chickens, with reduced immunity, in crowded sheds in constant contact with their faeces provides an ideal breeding ground for the virus to evolve. International trade has also probably contributed to spreading bird flu round the world<sup>16</sup>. Change in the poultry industry is urgent, keeping birds in better conditions, to improve the welfare of billions of chickens and to cut the risk to as many human lives<sup>52</sup>.

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Care of animals is also critical in achieving food safety. Food poisoning is a huge problem in most countries – for example, 76 million Americans become infected and 5000 die from this each year<sup>15</sup>. A major source of these infections is animal products and this is strongly affected by how farm animals are treated. For E. coli, the main route of human infection is contamination of meat by animal faeces. This is affected by whether livestock are given clean, dry bedding, whether they are kept crowded (which may bring them into contact with each other's faeces) and whether they are handled carefully at slaughter<sup>58</sup>. Similarly, many people are probably infected by Salmonella

from poultry and eggs<sup>2</sup> and the chance of infection is affected by management. Thus the process of starving hens to shock them into renewed egg laying ('forced molting') is illegal in some countries, legal in others, and increases infection of the eggs<sup>7</sup>.

Positive interactions with animals help human health in other ways. The presence of pets is beneficial to some patients' recovery in hospital: for example, it reduced medication use, violence and suicide attempts in a state Mental Health

Department hospital<sup>42</sup>. Old people show many signs of reduced stress if they own a dog or a cat<sup>31</sup> and pets may also have positive influences on the development of children<sup>21</sup>. Interactions with animals are an important part of humane education too, which is considered in the next section.

**“ Our task must to free ourselves...by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures. ”**

**ALBERT EINSTEIN**

# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON ANIMAL WELFARE

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND ANIMAL WELFARE

Attitudes and behaviour towards animals are a significant aspect of personal, social and moral development. This is partly because they are not distinct from people's attitudes and behaviour towards each other, but overlap with those. This has been recognised by philosophers for at least 200 years, right up to the present day<sup>37,46</sup>. Some leaders place considerable weight on this point: Mahatma Gandhi said that "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

Increased attention to this topic is producing both concrete benefits and more general optimism for progress. For example, it is now clear that if prisoners are given opportunities to interact with animals this may reduce their rates of re-offending after release (Case study 3) and several countries are introducing such programmes<sup>74</sup>. There is also increased understanding of links between animal abuse and violence between humans<sup>43</sup>. Thus some men are aggressive to both women and their pets<sup>9</sup>; such women are often more willing to enter a shelter, ending the violence, if accommodation is also provided for their pets. More generally, these issues are prompting increased recognition of the value of humane education (Case study 4).

“ The question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? But, Can they suffer? ”

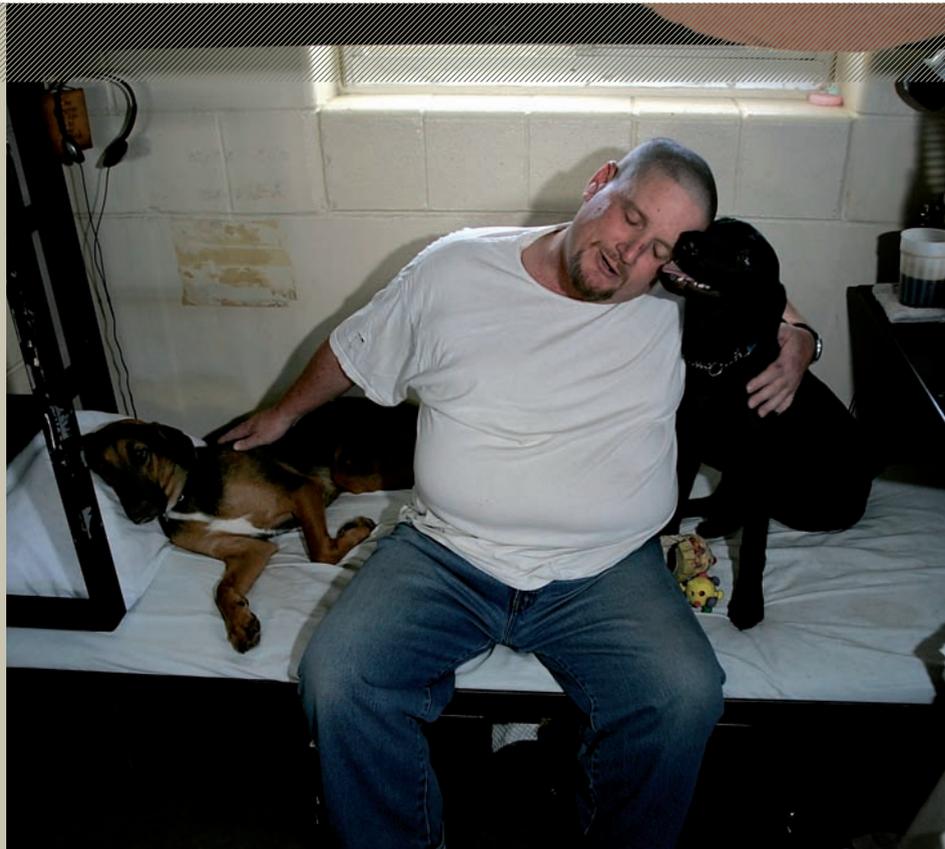
JEREMY BENTHAM, PHILOSOPHER

### CASE STUDY 3

#### Rehabilitation of prisoners

Many prisons in the USA run prisoner-animal interaction programmes, offering the opportunity, responsibility and skills of training an animal<sup>65</sup>. For example the Prison Pet Partnership Program has been running at the Washington State Correctional Center for Women since 1981. Inmates train dogs from shelters to become service dogs for disabled people and more than 500 dogs have been placed since the programme began. The prisoners involved also work towards qualifications in animal care. The programme benefits the dogs, their recipients, the prisoners and society at large. Service dogs are trained at a greatly reduced cost, and reoffending by prisoners has been reduced, with none at all recorded over the last three years, all those involved finding employment upon release<sup>61</sup>. Prisons in several countries keep farm animals – which also produce income – and some run rehabilitation programmes involving care and training of horses<sup>74</sup>.

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## CASE STUDY 4

### Humane education

A major concern in South African schools is violence among learners, with generalised disrespect a major cause<sup>75</sup>. A 2007 survey at a primary school near Cape Town found that 81% of parents would like the school to help them deal with behaviour management and discipline in the home<sup>33</sup>, while questions to learners aged 7 to 11 showed poor understanding of the line between punishment and abuse within the family, including the family pets. Educators are now turning to humane education to help reintroduce respect for people and animals into children's lives. In 2008, for the first time, humane education readers will be included in the books distributed to every classroom by the Western Cape Education Department<sup>90</sup>. An established project in the USA shows the effectiveness of this approach. The National Association for Humane and Environmental Education produces Kids in Nature's Defense (KIND) News. More than 35,000 teachers use this newspaper in their classroom<sup>49</sup>. After participating in the curriculum, children scored better on humane attitude scales and generalised humane attitudes from animals to people<sup>9</sup>. A 2006 survey of teachers using KIND News found 84% thought it had improved the children's treatment of one another<sup>48</sup>.

Consideration of animal care is also helpful in promoting gender equality and opportunities for social development of women and families. Men, women and children often adopt different roles in owning and looking after animals. For example, in many developing countries women primarily care for small livestock such as poultry<sup>39</sup>. So there is a need to support husbandry of small animals as well as more prominent species such as cattle<sup>57</sup>. In those contexts poultry and other small animals may also be important for family nutrition and therefore contribute to poverty and hunger reduction.

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## POVERTY AND HUNGER REDUCTION AND ANIMAL WELFARE

Food security is best achieved by growing food on a local basis for the people who need it, such as people in rural areas. If farms are fairly small, complex infrastructure is not needed and people can generally look after their animals well and productively, feeding themselves and also earning some income, particularly if they cooperate to overcome difficulties<sup>59</sup>. Indeed, good animal husbandry contributes considerably to nutrition and food security, as meat and animal products are important in the diet of many people. In most cases in most countries, looking after animals properly (for example protecting them from disease, heat and cold) also improves their productivity. Improving animal care helps farmers to provide food for themselves, their families and the community<sup>59,67</sup>. This includes care of working animals (Case study 5) as well as farm animals.

### CASE STUDY 5

#### Working horses in Colombia

In Colombia's capital, Bogotá, 3500 working horses provide the livelihood for 18,000 families including many poor people in the slums<sup>76</sup>. They transport many goods including food, construction debris and material for recycling. In 2006, clinics held jointly by NGOs Equus and WSPA treated 268 horses: 60% had foot problems, 40% nutritional problems and 30% skin lesions or saddle wounds<sup>18</sup>. Outreach programmes offer a variety of approaches: treating health problems, providing vaccines and hoof picks, and advising on harnesses. Farriers, veterinarians and police officers are also trained to care for working equines. Horses that are well looked after and healthy are more reliable in their work and help to improve the income of many families in poverty. The Brooke organisation helps 500,000 working equines worldwide each year, supporting the livelihoods of more than three million people<sup>13</sup>.

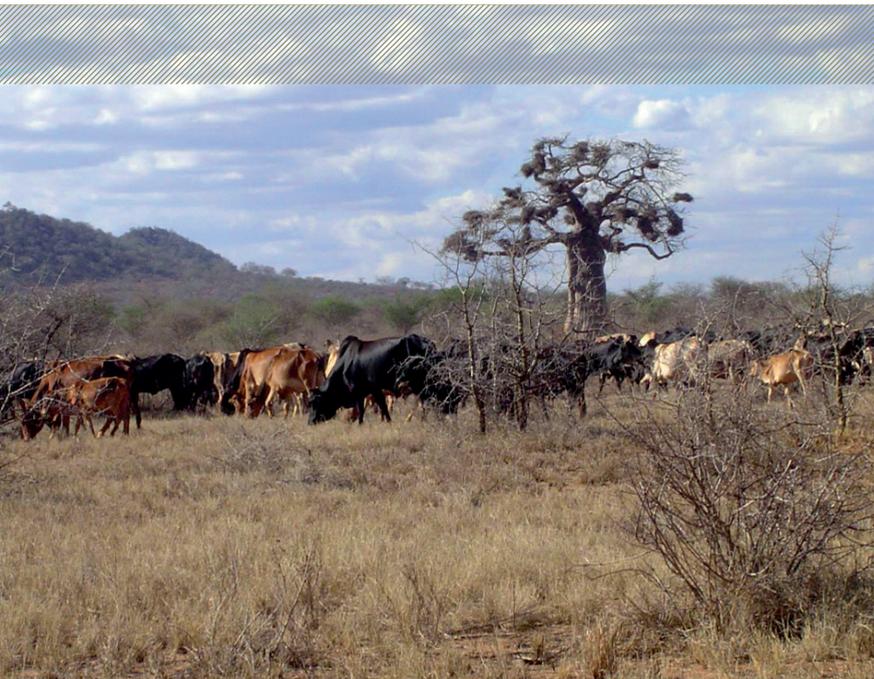


Some diseases are mostly confined to animals but have important economic effects for humans, such as Foot & Mouth Disease. The spread of Foot & Mouth Disease is often worsened by the massive movements of animals and animal products that are common in large-scale animal production, and the risk of spreading disease is even greater when live animals are transported long distances for slaughter, including between countries<sup>4</sup>. Preventing long distance transport of animals (and transporting the meat instead) would reduce both animal suffering and the economic damage done by such diseases. The European Food Safety Authority<sup>23</sup> says that "Transport should therefore be avoided wherever possible and journeys should be as short as possible."

As improving welfare also generally improves productivity<sup>45</sup>, there may be benefits for exports as well as home consumption for many countries (Case study 6). Many developing countries have extensive land and relatively cheap labour. These offer a competitive advantage in agricultural trade, especially if they target the high-value organic and welfare markets in Europe. Thus countries in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere may be able to sell into these niche markets with little change to their agriculture<sup>12</sup>. This is because many aspects of their treatment of animals – such as giving them plenty of space – are already those that people in developed countries prefer.



Producers in developing countries may receive assistance in developing welfare friendly markets, giving attention to both food safety and animal welfare<sup>68</sup>.



## CASE STUDY 6

### Namibia's beef exports

Livestock farming contributes 90% of Namibia's agricultural GDP and 6% of total exports<sup>36</sup>. The government manages the Farm Assured Namibian Meat programme (FANMEAT), which encourages farmers to meet animal welfare and traceability standards similar to those of the European Union (EU). Namibia has become Africa's largest exporter of beef to the UK, with a third of its meat exports destined for the EU. The advantages of FANMEAT are clear for the animals, with veterinary inspections, high welfare standards and good handling and transport facilities. Around 13,000 farmers have joined the programme, giving them healthier stock, less thefts (due to tagging) and increasing exports<sup>12</sup>. High welfare standards benefit the animals and give the producers a market advantage over their competitors.

Intergovernmental organisations are recognising the contributions of animal treatment and animal welfare to economics and to poverty and hunger reduction. The International Finance Corporation, part of the World Bank Group, has issued two relevant publications: "Creating business opportunity through improved animal welfare"<sup>34</sup> and "Animal welfare in livestock operations"<sup>35</sup>. The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), recognising the importance to animal health of other aspects of welfare, has drawn up welfare standards for transport and slaughter of farm animals (including for disease control) that have been agreed by the 169 member countries<sup>53</sup>. Standards for housing and treatment during rearing will follow.

# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON ANIMAL WELFARE

## DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND ANIMAL WELFARE

Disasters may be caused by either natural or human-made events, in combination with inadequate preparedness and/or responses that contribute to large-scale negative outcomes. Such outcomes for animals are important both in themselves and for their effects on human welfare and the environment (Case study 7). For example, if measures are not taken after an earthquake to protect livestock as well as people, the livelihood of many people may be lost even though their lives have been saved. Refugees often refuse to enter a refugee camp if, in doing so, they must abandon their animals, so facilities for livestock should be provided at such camps. Furthermore, precautions in advance of earthquakes can reduce losses to life and property, thus also reducing the need for rescue operations. About a billion of the world's poorest people depend on animals for food, income, social status or cultural identification, as well as companionship and security<sup>25</sup>. So the World Bank's 2007 report on *Agriculture for Development*<sup>83</sup>, in its section on 'Natural disasters and vulnerability', emphasises the special vulnerability of developing countries in this respect. Yet disasters patently affect developed as well as developing countries, and companion animals as well as farm animals (Case study 8).

“ The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated. ”

MAHATMA GANDHI

### CASE STUDY 7

#### Bangladesh floods

In August 2007 the worst floods in memory hit Bangladesh. More than one million people and their animals were displaced by the flood water. If they lose their cows and goats, families are left without a staple part of their diet and with no livelihood. The floods ruined stored hay, destroyed grass and spread water-borne parasites: 240,000 cows and 180,000 goats were at risk of sickness and starvation. The World Society for the Protection of Animals worked with local NGOs the Human Development Program, the Bangladesh Animal Welfare Organisation and charitable feed suppliers BRAC, with Chittagong Veterinary University and the Government of Bangladesh. Emergency concentrated feed and anti-parasite treatment were provided to 56,000 animals belonging to small farmers in the worst affected areas<sup>86</sup>. Farmers will return more quickly to self sufficiency after such a disaster if their animals survive and are healthy.



## CASE STUDY 8

### Hurricane Katrina

The effects of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans and the surrounding area in 2005 were devastating and have increased recognition that disaster management needs effective planning and preparation as well as effective response, for animals as well as people. The authorities struggled to cope with evacuating the people affected and were not prepared to deal with the thousands of animals also threatened, so NGOs such as the Humane Society of the United States carried out a major relief operation for animals. As many as 50,000 cats and dogs were left behind as their owners



evacuated<sup>14</sup>, but some people instead remained in danger. Of the people who chose to stay in their homes 44% did so because they would not leave their pets<sup>44</sup>. This was a major public health issue and probably led to human deaths. The national outcry at these catastrophic developments resulted in the passing of the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act only a year later. Pets and service animals must now be included in emergency preparedness plans<sup>32</sup>. In the USA people should no longer face the dilemma of risking danger to stay with their pets or finding safety and leaving them behind.

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Disaster response is aimed at both relief and recovery. Most urgent is delivery of immediate rescue and welfare operations for animals affected by disasters. Then medium-term interventions to support the rebuilding of animal welfare infrastructures should follow. In addition, disaster reduction measures include analysis of the effect of disasters on specific environments and societies to determine potential threats to animals, and then work with governments to address those threats in advance of disasters striking. Disaster preparedness measures include comprehensive plans and framework activities at all levels to enable governments and civil organisations to protect and manage animals prior to, during and in the aftermath of disasters: for example, designing more effective early warning systems and practical evacuation routes and procedures.

# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON ANIMAL WELFARE

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND ANIMAL WELFARE

The ways in which animals are treated are a major component of environmental sustainability, including affecting climate change. The livestock sector is responsible for 18% of greenhouse gas emissions and this is getting worse as meat and milk production are projected to double by 2050<sup>26</sup>. The problem is worst at the extremes. For

“**How we treat animals and how we treat each other are two stems that grow from the same root. If there are thorns of neglect, contempt or cruelty on one, we can be sure to find them on the other.**”

**HEAD OF EDUCATION IN THE WESTERN CAPE, MR RONALD SWARTZ, ALL-AFRICA HUMANE EDUCATION SUMMIT IN 2003.**

example, cattle on very poor diets digest them inefficiently, while those on the high energy feeds in intensive dairy production produce manure with more volatile materials<sup>26</sup>. So impact on climate change can be reduced by slowing the increase in livestock numbers, which is particularly rapid in developing countries; by improving nutrition of malnourished animals; and by avoiding the feeding of animals with unnaturally concentrated diets.

Intensive farming is also associated with other problems, such as pollution (Case study 9). By contrast, livestock kept in extensive conditions use local resources and return

nutrients to the land. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN<sup>26</sup> recommends that “Industrial livestock production should be decentralised to accessible croplands where wastes can be recycled without overloading soils and freshwater.”

### CASE STUDY 9

#### Farming and water supplies

Intensive livestock farms need huge supplies of water either from groundwater or transported in, and they produce huge quantities of manure, which all too frequently result in soil and water pollution<sup>60</sup>. The State of Minnesota commissioned a Generic Environmental Impact Statement on Animal Agriculture. One of its conclusions was that the number of animals kept in a watershed should be limited according to the area of land on which manure could be spread<sup>47</sup>. Clustering of animal production facilities into limited areas tends to go hand-in-hand with intensification: with increased farm size, confinement of animals and less individual attention given to those animals. Pollution potential is greatly increased where animals are kept on slatted or concrete floors and liquid manure is stored or sprayed on the land. The problem is reduced if animals graze, or are kept on bedding, producing solid manure. Either solution is also more humane for the animals<sup>5</sup>.

©Michael Reilly/PA Photos



Water shortages are widely predicted to be one of the major problems of the current century<sup>71</sup>. Good animal management is important for the animals and for both water and land conservation. FAO<sup>26</sup> points out that “The proper control of grazing season, intensity, frequency and distribution can improve vegetation cover, reduce erosion and as a result, can maintain or improve water quality and availability.”

Consideration of animals is also important in many other aspects of sustainability, such as management of wildlife (including fish stocks), conservation of habitats, maintenance of biodiversity and protection of endangered species (Case study 10). There is a strong link between protecting individual animals and protecting species, including the fact that both are regarded as having value<sup>18</sup>.

## CASE STUDY 10



### Wildlife in East Africa

The bushmeat trade is one of the largest threats to wildlife in Africa and causes immense suffering. Methods such as snaring are brutal and non-selective, with species captured including endangered animals such as giraffe<sup>38</sup>, cheetah and elephants<sup>65</sup>. WSPA works with the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust in and around Tsavo National Park, Kenya, to protect animals by making arrests and removing snares (over 5100 snares removed in 2005). Providing training and resources for alternative livelihoods is also vital as poverty and land pressure fuel the bushmeat trade. Many former poachers have started training as wildlife protectors<sup>56</sup> and four community groups have received beehives and training to produce honey<sup>87</sup>. This is backed up by education programmes in schools and villages teaching compassion and changing attitudes to the bushmeat trade. In 2007 more than 800 pupils have been reached in schools in the district<sup>87</sup>. A similar project setting up community markets in Zambia has retrained 350 poachers at a cost of US\$280 each, much less than the average US\$2000 spent finding and arresting a poacher<sup>70</sup>. Helping people to support local wildlife protects animals – including endangered species – and helps the people too.

# UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON ANIMAL WELFARE

## A common theme: the UN Millennium Development Goals

Many of the above points, emphasising the importance of animal care, are brought together by their relevance to the UN Millennium Development Goals, as many of the goals will be helped by increased care of animals.

- Reducing poverty, hunger and child mortality, improving maternal health and combating disease (goals 1, 4, 5 and 6) will all be assisted by improving nutrition, including by appropriate use of products from healthy, productive livestock.
- Combating disease in people (goal 6) must also tackle diseases in animals.
- Ensuring environmental sustainability (goal 7) involves decisions on management of livestock and wildlife, for example choosing more sustainable grazing systems rather than intensive housing.
- Developing partnerships for development (goal 8) will be promoted by trade of organic and high-welfare animal products.
- Promoting gender equality (goal 3) will be aided by recognising the roles and opportunities men and women have in animal care, and supporting these appropriately to the benefit of both animals and people.

## Conclusion: animal welfare matters

Animal welfare is a global concern. Animal welfare matters intrinsically to all sentient animals – those able to suffer and feel pleasure. Animal welfare matters to people, including but not limited to people who depend on animals, and caring for animals benefits both people and the environment. It is time for the world to take this responsibility to animals seriously. It is time for a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare.

The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) and its key partners are acting as secretariat for supportive governments of the initiative. Key partners are the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), Humane Society International (HSI), American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and Compassion in World Farming (CIWF)

**World Society for the Protection of Animals  
2008**

**For further information see [www.udaw.org](http://www.udaw.org) or email [udaw@wspa-international.org](mailto:udaw@wspa-international.org)**



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